

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-11 FRB-02 H-03 INR-10

INT-08 L-03 LAB-06 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 AID-20

CIEP-02 SS-20 STR-08 TAR-02 TRSE-00 USIA-15 PRS-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8006

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C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 1373

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR BM UN

SUBJECT: GUB REACTION TO UNGA SIXTH SPECIAL SESSION

REF: A) STATE 99106

B) STATE 104050

SUMMARY: GUB OFFICIALS APPEAR TO REGARD UNGA SIXTH SPECIAL SESSION AS LARGELY IRRELEVANT AND WASTE OF TIME AND DOUBTLESS DISLIKE STEAMROLLER TACTICS OF G-77/HACG. GUB SEES BOTH SIDES OF SOME ECONOMIC ISSUES WHICH AGITATE LDCS AND KEEPS ALOOF FROM LDC/NACG POLITICAL CAUSES, ALTHOUGH AVOIDING CONSPICUOUS OPPOSITION TO THEM. SINCE GUB POSTURE ON NON-ALIGNED/LDC ISSUES RELATIVELY CONGENIAL TO USG, BELIEVE HIGH-LEVEL APPROACH ADVOCATED REF B WOULD BE UN-HELPFUL AND MIGHT EVEN HAVE NEGATIVE EFFECT, GIVEN GUB HYPER-SENSITIVITY TO BIG POWER "PRESSURE". END SUMMARY.

1. GUB ATTITUDE TOWARD UNGA SIXTH SPECIAL SESSION FROM VERY BEGINNING WAS APATHETIC IF NOT NEGATIVE, AS WAS DEMONSTRATED BY GUB'S FAILURE TO SEND OFFICIALS OF ANY STATURE TO ATTEND. ONLY TWO LOW-RANKING "TECHNICIANS" WERE SENT FROM RANGOON TO JOIN GUB
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DELEGATION.

"? PRIOR TO SESSION, GUB FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS TOLD US FRANKLY THAT THEY DOUBTED SESSION WOULD ACCOMPLISH MUCH, AND THEIR RECENT APATHETIC COMMENTS AND EVIDENT INDIFFERENCE TO THE SUBJECT MAKE CLEAR THAT THEIR EXPECTATIONS WERE FULFILLED. GUB OFFICIALS ARE UNDER NO ILLUSION THAT THE DECLARATION THE SESSION APPROVED WILL HAVE ANY PRACTICAL EFFECT, AND THEY REGARD THE SESSION AS LARGELY IRRELEVANT AND A WASTE OF TIME. WHILE GUB OFFICIALS HAVE NOT COMMENTED SPECIFICALLY ON STEAMROLLER TACTICS OF G-77/NACG MAJORITY AT SPECIAL SESSION, THEY HAVE IN THE PAST EXPRESSED THEIR ANNOYANCE OVER SUCH TACTICS AT OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORUMS AND DOUBTLESS FOUND THESE EQUALLY DISTASTEFUL.

3. SELF INTEREST DICTATES GUB DISTASTE FOR STEAMROLLER TACTICS AND DESIRE TO AVOID ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN NON-ALIGNED POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CAMPAIGNS. AS A COUNTRY WHICH EXPORTS MANY RAW MATERIALS BUT MUST ALSO IMPORT PETROLEUM AND COAL, BURMA IS AWARE OF INTERDEPENDENT NATURE OF WORLD ECONOMY AND CAN SEE BOTH SIDES OF SOME ECONOMIC ISSUES WHICH AGITATE MANY LDCS. EVER AWARE OF THE POLITICAL DELICACY OF BURMA'S GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION, GUB STEERS AWAY FROM INVOLVEMENT IN MOST POLITICAL CAUSES, SAVING ITS FIRE FOR THOSE FEW WHICH VITALLY CONCERN IT. GUB'S SOLIDARITY WITH OTHER LDCS ON ECONOMIC ISSUES IS THUS LUKEWARM AT BEST, AND THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF ITS MOVING TOWARD GREATER SOLIDARITY ON POLITICAL AND SECURITY ISSUES. TO THE CONTRARY, BURMA'S LONG-STANDING SENTIMENTAL TIES WITH THE NON-ALIGNED HAVE BEEN STRAINED IN RECENT YEARS BY SUCH PERFORMANCES AS THE 1973 ALGIERS CONFERENCE (WHERE GUB EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ON A NUMBER OF POLITICAL RESOLUTIONS), AND INCREASINGLY EXTREME POSTURES BY G-77/NACG WILL ONLY CAUSE GUB TO INCREASE ITS DISTANCE FROM THEM.

4. ON OTHER HAND, BURMA WANTS TO KEEP ITS HEAD DOWN, AND THERE IS NO PROSPECT OF ITS BECOMING AN ACTIVE OPPONENT OF CURRENT TRENDS AMONG LDCS AND NON-ALIGNED. THE TYPE OF HIGH LEVEL APPROACH MENTIONED IN REF B WOULD THEREFORE BE UNHELPFUL AND POSSIBLE HARMFUL TO US INTERESTS IN BURMA. WITH ITS EXTREME SENSITIVITY TO BIG POWER PRESSURE, GUB MIGHT REACT NEGATIVELY TO SUCH AN APPROACH AND EVEN FEEL A NEED TO REASSERT ITS TIES TO THE NON-ALIGNED.

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5. THEREFORE, I BELIEVE OUR BEST COURSE IN BURMA IS TO EXPRESS OUR VIEW CASUALLY TO GUB OFFICIALS IN COURSE OF NORMAL SOCIAL CONTACTS. BASICALLY, HOWEVER, GUB POSTURE ON NON-ALIGNED/LDC ISSUES IS REASONABLY CONGENIAL TO THE USG, AND WE WOULD DO BEST TO LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE.
OSBORN

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